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MAR 13 2007

CLAIMS

In the claims:

This Listing of Claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in this application.

1. (Previously amended) A method, performed on a computer of supplier, for use in managing a supply chain with multiple customers, the method comprising:
  - receiving a new delivery schedule from a customer;
  - determining a deviation between the new delivery schedule and a confirmed delivery schedule from the customer; and
  - determining if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration based on the deviation;
  - wherein, if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration, the method further comprises:
    - generating a schedule of production resources and inventory that satisfies at least some requirements of the new delivery schedule; and
    - confirming to the customer that the supplier accepts the new delivery schedule.
2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating comprises updating an existing schedule of production resources.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein generating comprises creating a new schedule of production resources.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein determining the deviation comprises comparing items from the new delivery schedule to items from the confirmed delivery schedule.
5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the items comprise quantities of goods to be delivered at specified dates.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the deviation is indicative of an error if the deviation exceeds a predetermined tolerance.
7. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:  
prompting a user for input if the deviation exceeds the predetermined tolerance;  
wherein determining if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration is based, at least in part, on the user input.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the new delivery schedule comprises a forecast of delivery requirements.
9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the forecast comprises a long-term forecast.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising allocating resources based on the schedule of production resources.
11. (Original) A machine-readable medium that stores executable instructions for use in managing a supply chain with multiple customers, the instructions causing a machine to:

receive a new delivery schedule from a customer;

determine a deviation between the new delivery schedule and a confirmed delivery schedule from the customer;

determine if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration based on the deviation;

generate a schedule of production resources and inventory that satisfies at least some requirements of the new delivery schedule if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration; and

confirm to the customer that the supplier accepts the new delivery schedule..

12. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein generating comprises updating an existing schedule of production resources.

13. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein generating comprises creating a new schedule of production resources.

14. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein determining the deviation comprises comparing items from the new delivery schedule to items from the confirmed delivery schedule.

15. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 14, wherein the items comprise quantities of goods to be delivered at specified dates.

16. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein the deviation is indicative of an error if the deviation exceeds predetermined tolerance.

17. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 16, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to:

prompt a user for input if the deviation exceeds the predetermined tolerance:

wherein determining if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration is based, at least in part, on the user input.

18. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein the new delivery schedule comprises a forecast of delivery requirements.

19. (Previously amended) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, wherein the forecast comprises a long-term forecast.

20. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 11, further comprising instructions that cause the machine to allocate resources based on the schedule of production resources.

21. (Original) A apparatus for use in managing a supply chain with multiple customers, the apparatus comprising a processor that executes instructions to:

receive a new delivery schedule from a customers

determine a deviation between the new delivery schedule and a confirmed delivery schedule from the customer;

determine if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration based on the deviation;

generate a schedule of production resources and inventory that satisfies at least some requirements of the new delivery schedule if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration; and

confirm to the customer that the supplier accepts the new delivery schedule.

22. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein generating comprises updating an existing schedule of production resources.

23. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein generating comprises creating a new schedule of production resources.

24. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein determining the deviation comprises comparing items from the new delivery schedule to items from the confirmed delivery schedule.

25. (Original) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein the items comprise quantities of goods to be delivered at specified dates.

26. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the deviation is indicative of an error if the deviation exceeds a predetermined tolerance.

27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 26, wherein the processor executes instructions to:  
prompt a user for input if the deviation exceeds the predetermined tolerance;

wherein determining if the new delivery schedule is eligible for further consideration is based, at least in part, on the user input.

28. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the new delivery schedule comprises a forecast of delivery requirements.

29. (Original) The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the forecast comprises a long-term forecast.

30. (Original) The apparatus of claim 21, wherein the processor executes instructions to allocate resources based on the schedule of production resources.